

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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Review of the Month

WHAT will Wakefield do? That is the question of the hour to-day passed from mouth to mouth in Labour circles. The Movement is waiting almost pathetically for indications from some By-election that the tide has again set in our favour.

But patience, my brothers, patience. We hope Wakefield will rise to its grand opportunity, but we shall not be too disappointed if it doesn't. We must face facts. Rarely in the first six months of any Government is there to be noted signs of the sort of landslide that would have enabled us to reverse the terrific majorities gained in the late General Election. Wakefield, it is true, has a majority of only 4,107 to pull down, but the task at Dumbartonshire was a Conservative majority of 12,288. And let us be careful not to draw false morals or false cheer. In Dumbartonshire Tom Johnston reduced the Tory majority by 9,000 votes, but the Labour vote still fell short of 1929 by 4,449 votes. The change in the tide is coming, but perhaps it may be all the better if it comes slowly, and as a result of our education and propaganda rather than as a result of a sweeping revulsion of feeling. No pendulums, please!

And the next big task comes with May Day. Not since the days of the war has Labour's international outlook needed such stressing as now. At a time when the common people of all countries are suffering from Capitalism's present dreadful disease, the British Government offers the world not bread but a stone. Its contribution to the solution of world-wide calamities is a declaration of economic and tariff war. Labour might well, at the coming demonstrations, emphasise its opposition

to these proceedings, and its belief in understandings that would make not only military warfare but tariff warfare a thing of the past. Education on this question is badly needed, and in no locality, we hope, will the opportunities of May Day be neglected. In the industrial areas, where the electorate proved false to Labour last October our message should prove particularly opportune, and every rank of Labour, industrial and political, should be at work on May Day. There is yet time to organise if nothing has yet been done.

The Annual Conference of the Labour Party is this year to be held at Leicester. It is twenty-one years since the Labour Party visited the stronghold of its then Secretary—the present Prime Minister! In the previous year Mr. J. Keir Hardie had presided over the Newport Conference, but the chairmanship of the Leicester Conference reverted to Mr. W. C. Robinson. The Labour Party of 1911 was a different organisation from that which we know to-day. Its four hundred and sixty delegates representing 1,430,539 members were almost exclusively representative of nationally affiliated Trades Unions. Divisional Labour Parties hardly came into the picture. The Conference at Leicester this year will show a remarkable change in this respect, but we fancy the spirit of Mr. MacDonald will be troubled while this Conference is under weigh.

The arrangements for the National Conference of Labour Women are proceeding apace. The Conference this year is to be held at The Dome, Brighton (whatever would the dead king who made Brighton think of that?) on June 14th, 15th and 16th. The Secretary of the Conference is Mrs. Barbara Ayrton Gould, J.P., the Chief Woman Officer of the Labour Party. The agenda which has been cir-

culated almost rivals that of the Party Conference itself in the comprehensiveness and kind of resolution to be discussed. We note that one resolution calls on the Conference to refuse readmission to the leaders who have been expelled from its ranks. Another relates to County Councillors' travelling expenses, and suggests free railway passes, though this resolution, we are afraid, must come from an area where no bus services exist. A further resolution urges that no full-time official of the Labour Party shall be eligible as a Parliamentary candidate. On this subject the Conference will miss the vigorous statement of the other side of the picture which might have been expected from the late Dr. Marion Phillips.

"Sidney Webb" is the author of a new Fabian Tract entitled "What Happened in 1931." This pamphlet is a historical document of surpassing importance. Its concluding words are of special interest to our readers. We quote: "The Labour Party has now the opportunity, during the next few years, of (1) applying itself continuously to the ubiquitous educational propaganda by which alone it can double the number of its adherents; (2) of quietly working out in greater detail its constructive programme, without prematurely committing itself as a Party to any but general principles; (3) of steadily accustoming the public to one item after another in that programme by the publication of an incessant stream, not only of popular pamphlets, but also of books, lectures and articles in the weeklies and monthlies by individual members; and last but not least, (4) of seeking to develop, within the Party itself, much more of that friendly social intercourse among fellow-workers in a common cause which so effectively promotes its success."

NOW READY.

BOUNDED VOLUMES OF THE

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PAMPHLETS RECEIVED.

"Smashing the Unemployed!" Price one penny—The Labour Party.

This pamphlet explains in detail the meanness of the Means Test, and brings home the responsibility to Mr. MacDonald and his allies.

"Pauperising the Unemployed." Price twopence—Trades Union Congress General Council.

The T.U.C. case against the Means Test is authoritatively stated in this pamphlet, which also contains a long list of specific cases of hardship under the test.

"Why a Labour Party?" One penny—The Labour Party.

This pamphlet is written for those who do not belong to the Labour Party, but who vote Labour at elections. It therefore is particularly useful for present service.

"The Bread Tax." By Dr. Alfred Salter, M.P. Price one penny. The Labour Party.

Dr. Salter's speech on the Wheat Bill is here published and is an authoritative statement of the Labour case.

"The Food Combines." Price threepence.—Labour Research Department.

A study of the methods employed by the food monopolies in maintaining high prices, the development towards trustification and the large profits made by such enterprises.

"What Happened in 1931: A Record." By Sidney Webb. Price twopence—The Fabian Society.

This pamphlet is a sober historical statement of the political incidents of the past year, and its merit in this respect will give it a position as a pointer to the truth beyond its present service.

"The London Traffic Combine." Price twopence.—Labour Research Department.

A study of the finances and ramifications of the London Traffic Combine. The authoritative figures and facts contained in this pamphlet should prove of considerable service to Socialist speakers in the London area.

"The League of Youth." Price one penny.—The Labour Party.

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Labour Party Secre-

tary and Executive Council Official, not to mention the members of the League of Youth themselves. The pamphlet explains the objects and working of the League, and contains many suggestions as to its activities. The rules and constitution are also embodied in the pamphlet, together with Standing Orders and other useful matter.

"Ten Years of Railway Finance." Price twopence. — Labour Research Department.

Crammed full of telling facts concerning the finance of British railways. We quote one fact of outstanding importance: "In the last eleven years there has been drawn out of the industry in interest and dividend payments, the vast total of £514,000,000." Some depression!

LABOUR PARTY PROPAGANDA AND EDUCATION IN LONDON.

The outstanding moral of the General Election, several times emphasised in the "Labour Organiser," and now acknowledged on practically all hands in the Labour Movement, is the necessity for an acceleration of propaganda and educational activities and the placing of this work upon a sound and consistent basis.

In this connection a memorandum just issued by the London Labour Party is of profound interest, outlining as it does the various steps which should be taken to crystallise the general conclusion referred to and put plans into operation. Propaganda and educational work is necessarily many-sided, and the directions in which activity is to be sought and encouraged are diverse. Hence the memorandum deals with school room and other public meetings, concert meetings, and public gatherings of several other kinds. It gives hints on semi-propaganda ward

meetings, women section meetings and League of Youth meetings as distinct from general propaganda. Suggestions are made for the education of Party membership by lectures, study circles, etc. The memorandum also deals with other matters such as demonstrations of canvassing, speakers' classes, and the selection and training for public offices.

The memorandum is timely and its suggestions are applicable to the greater part of the country outside London. We are glad therefore to be able to state that copies of the memorandum will be gladly supplied to readers of the "Labour Organiser" who make application for same to the Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison, J.P., at the London Labour Party Offices, 258/262, Westminster Bridge Road, London, S.E.1.

A HOLIDAY WITH A PROFIT. See Russia for Yourself.

The advertisement of the Workers' Travel Association Ltd., in another part of this issue deals with a novel and instructional holiday worthy of special consideration. Russia enters so largely into political controversy that a first-hand knowledge of conditions in Russia is an asset worth acquiring by all those who can afford the very moderate cost of a tour.

The W.T.A. have a choice of four different tours of varying length at prices ranging from £19 16s. od. to £34 6s. od., and the tours cover from fourteen to thirty days. It is not easy to plan a holiday in one's own country for such moderate expenditure, and there should therefore be some eagerness to take advantage of these special tours.

We advise our readers to send for the special booklet entitled "See Russia for Yourself." This booklet contains some interesting facts and full information regarding the tours.

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Make Sure of Your Speaker

Complaints reach us from time to time of booked speakers failing to turn up at the meetings for which they are advertised.

If a speaker has been definitely booked and notified in time of the arrangements for his meeting, it is an almost unforgiveable offence to let the Local Party and the audience down by failing to put in an appearance. The occasion when a speaker only discovers his inability to attend at the last minute must of necessity be rare, and even in such circumstances it is up to the speaker to find a substitute, or at any rate to set in motion Party machinery which might fill the gap.

It is unfortunately true that certain speakers have a poor appreciation of their responsibility in the matter mentioned, but investigations we have made from time to time into allegations of failure to keep appointments shows that there is something to be said on the other side.

We have discovered that speakers are sometimes button-holed, and a promise secured in respect of a distant date. The verbal arrangement is not confirmed, and the speaker hears nothing further of the matter until a day or so before the meeting. This of course is not businesslike. A verbal engagement or promise ought to be followed up by correspondence and confirmation, but there is often the fear, we are afraid, that the speaker may back down from his word and so arrangements proceed in the hope that having gone so far there can be no opportunity for the speaker to back out. This frame of mind does not reflect the confidence which ought to exist in speakers who are considered good enough to fill a Local Party's need.

Button-holing or pestering a speaker is the worst possible way of booking one. We prefer the more normal channels of correspondence. But whether a speaker is being first approached by letter, or is being asked to confirm a promise given, the secretary's letter ought to convey some indication of the kind of meeting which is contemplated. The more information that can be given the better, for some speakers like to know the nature of the hall and the probable size of the audience, while every speaker feels greater confidence that the best use will be made of his services if he is given some indication that effective advertising is contemplated.

It must not be forgotten that most speakers are wise to the ingenuities and ingenuosities of local secretaries. They don't like being booked for what purports to be an indoor meeting and then find themselves having to shout a meeting together at the street corner. Nor does a big speaker care to find that where he had been led to believe he would be the principal speaker he is sandwiched between two or three others; fixed up for three or four meetings on one night, or required only "to say a few words" at some social meeting. These things do happen, and speakers are more likely to consent or confirm when they get all the facts and receive some evidence of local efficiency.

Regarding the latter quality, we ourselves have had some experience which would have justified disappointing those responsible for the booking. After arranging to address organisation meetings we have found ourselves at public meetings, and recently at an election meeting instead. In several cases this year secretaries have neglected to notify the times of meetings, and in two cases recently the place of meeting was not mentioned, notwithstanding a specific enquiry on this point.

Secretaries would be well advised directly they advertise a speaker to send him samples of the printing. Four or five days before the meeting a further communication should be sent, and this should convey any information likely to be of service in helping the speaker to arrive punctually. A speaker from a distance should also be offered hospitality prior to the meeting. Above all it is desirable to let the speaker know if there is any subject of burning interest on which he is expected to comment.

The next point concerns the speaker's expenses. There are places which have a bad record in this matter, but a prompt settlement at the meeting will give mutual satisfaction, and in our experience it is cheaper in the long run. If speakers have to anticipate giving long credit and resort to debt collecting methods in order to get their dues, they cannot be expected to be so reasonable in their charges.

We fear that some slackness occasionally arises through everything being thrown upon the shoulders of the over-worked secretary. A devolution of labour is profitable. Why not a meeting secretary or lecture secretary?

TEN-YEAR-OLD WISDOM.

(From a Back Copy of the "Labour Organiser.")

To understand organisation you must understand human nature.

Devolution of work is an art that must be mastered by the man who would do things. No organiser can carry a Division himself; he must devolve the work on willing shoulders. What is more, he must create and foster willingness.

The man who works the hardest sometimes accomplishes the least. An organiser can arrive at the sum total of his work only by calculating what he induces others to do.

The march of the workers ceases to be a march when it becomes a rabble. Unless we create order and there is both system and discipline in our movement we shall never capture the heights.

Organisation, propaganda, education—which? These are not alternatives

or opposites. The greater includes the whole, and there is no successful propaganda or education that is not organised.

Organisation is not an orgy of card indexing; nor does it portend a régime of regimentation. But it does imply a mind made up, working purposefully for a given end.

Each man in his turn plays many parts. For an organiser must be a speaker, writer, lawyer, publicity expert, promoter, book-keeper, typist, canvasser, and lots of other things rolled in one. He is no good unless a little devil resides somewhere in him, yet he must be parson to his flock, and an angel on occasion.

Sometimes a political organiser is a man of great skill—Mr. Justice Sankey.

To which in 1932 we might add that a famous Judge is sometimes a man of great skill in conserving the interests of his class.

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STOP THAT LEAKAGE!!

On previous occasions we have drawn attention in the "Labour Organiser" to the loss of power and membership arising from members' removals.

Once again we take the liberty of referring to this subject, for practically nothing is done by the overwhelming majority of Local Parties to cope with the tremendous loss which arises from a removal of members from one constituency to another. Even in Divided Boroughs where the removal might be only a mile or so away into another Division, a member once removing from his constituency is deemed to be entirely lost and all touch with him ceases.

We believe there is a better way for our Movement to grapple with this question. It is all very well to leave the member who removes to make his presence known in his new constituency. The fact remains that when a worker enters a new home or into new surroundings there is much to occupy his mind, and often little to attract his attention to the Party. The address of the Local Labour Party Secretary is not readily obtainable and it is small wonder that over ninety per cent. of removals are generally lost entirely.

We are aware that removals are often sudden, and not discovered immediately, but there is a substantial proportion of removals which are not so sudden and which are contemplated some weeks beforehand. And there is a further substantial proportion of removals where connections are left behind from which the member's new address is easily obtainable.

There are, therefore, two directions in which it is possible to stop this leakage. In the first place membership cards should always bear the Secretary's address, and, it is worth while adding the footnote "In case of removal please immediately communicate your new address to the Secretary as above." If members are requested and trained to send in information of actual or contemplated removal, the evil is minimised, and the new addresses are easily secured.

In the next place some attempt should be made to trace members who have left without notification. It would surprise many local secretaries to know what a high proportion of removals are traced by firms who have a pecuniary interest in doing this, and who sometimes also have to meet obstacles in the way of ascertainment.

The Local Party has no such obstacles to fear, and some attention to this matter would certainly result in a proportion of removals being traced.

But what are the new addresses wanted for? And somebody asks of what benefit is it to take this trouble? The obvious answer is that it should be the business of every Local Party to communicate the addresses of removed members to the Parties into whose area the members have removed. If we can get a wider appreciation of the desirability of this practice and some general attempt to carry it out, we shall be able to cope with a source of loss which affects every Party in the country. The lack of interchange of removals is one of the biggest defects in local organisation and the result is not only loss in membership, but loss in votes when elections take place.

THE LABOUR PARTY SCHEME FOR STUDY AND EXAMINATION.

Enquiries still continue to reach us regarding the above scheme from those who are anxious to benefit by it. If there are any non-agents who yet desire to take up the course we advise them to make immediate application. The Registrar of the Study Courses informs us that arrangements can be made to accommodate a few more students, and as the present course is well under way special arrangements will be made to accommodate these. The fee, as most of our readers are aware, is 15/6 including booklets.

Intending students might with advantage again refer to the syllabus of courses which was published in our January issue. The student is expected to study the appropriate course for the month and then to answer six questions on the course. Ten marks are available for each answer making a total of sixty for the set. Marks must not drop below thirty-six for a reader to keep up to "pass" standard.

We particularly desire to urge practising agents who have not yet taken the study course to get in touch with the Registrar for the purpose of obtaining facilities for catching up those who began the course in January. We are aware of the limitations regarding an agent's time, but practical difficulties can be overcome, and we believe the Registrar will be found sympathetic where an agent finds that his functions have or are likely to interfere with the regular course of study.

CASUAL AND ORDINARY ELECTIONS AT SAME ELECTION.

A CORRESPONDENT writes us : "At our Urban Council Elections we had an ordinary vacancy in one ward and there was another seat to be filled which had been vacant for some time. I was surprised to find that no difference was made at the election and the two seats were filled just as if they were two ordinary vacancies — the voters all had two votes. Can you explain whether this is the right way of taking the election, because I remember once when living in —— (a borough) the two elections were kept quite distinct, though they took place at the same polling stations, and two separate results were given. Also will you please explain whether the candidate who topped the poll takes the ordinary vacancy at our election, or who comes out first?"

Though the procedure of election in all classes of local government elections is very similar, readers should remember that Borough Council elections and County Council elections are held under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882. Urban District and Parish Council Elections are held under the Local Government Act, 1894, and Metropolitan Borough Council Elections also have the latter Act applied to them by the London Government Act, 1899, for the purposes of election.

The Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, lays down the whole procedure for elections, but the Local Government Act, 1894, does not do so, and elections under this Act are further governed by Statutory Rules and Orders framed under the authority of the Act. In many details the Statutory Rules and Orders for Urban, Rural and Parish Council elections, and for Metropolitan Boroughs, afford a variation from the procedure of the Municipal Corporations Act, and in most cases these variations are an improvement from the point of simplicity and fairness—but not always so.

Now the Municipal Corporations Act lays it down that a casual vacancy is to be held in the same manner as an election to fill an ordinary vacancy, and the person elected is to hold the office until the time when the person in whose place he is elected would regularly have gone out of office. It is not specifically laid down that an ordinary vacancy and a casual vacancy being filled up on the same day should be kept distinct, but the provision just quoted makes it clear

that this should be done, and cases have been decided which make this matter now quite clear.

The provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, respecting the filling of casual vacancies are applied by the L.G. Act to District Council elections, *subject to the adaptation, alterations and exceptions made by Statutory Rules*. We therefore turn to the rules for guidance.

As hinted above, the Statutory Rules are ordinarily much clearer than earlier legislation. The present case is an example. In the rules governing Urban Council Elections the question our correspondent raises is cleared up without resort to judge-made law.

Rule 21 of the Urban District Councillors' Rules, 1931, lays it down that "in the event of one or more casual vacancies being filled up at any ordinary election, where there is a poll, the persons elected by the fewest votes shall be deemed elected to fill such vacancies. Should there be an equality of votes between such persons the Urban District Council shall determine by ballot which of such persons shall be deemed elected to fill the casual vacancy. If the persons elected to fill the casual vacancies will hold office for different periods, the person elected by the fewest votes, or if the votes are equal the person selected by the Urban District Council by ballot from the persons so elected shall hold office for the shorter period. Where there is no poll the person or persons to be deemed to be elected to fill the casual vacancy or vacancies shall be determined by the Urban District Council by ballot."

Our correspondent will find his question completely answered in the extract we have just given.

It should be noted that the Metropolitan Borough Councillors' Election Rules do not contain the provision above quoted, for the simple reason that all councillors retire at the same time, and the rule can of course only have application where only a portion of the Council vacates office.

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THE LABOUR PARTY

League of Youth Monthly Bulletin

EDITOR:

W. ARTHUR PEACOCK.

No. 22 (NEW SERIES)

APRIL, 1932

Shall We Produce a Play?

By JOYCE DAWSON-LARGE.

BEFORE an amateur dramatic society decides upon its choice of play, it must make up its mind whether its object in embarking upon theatricals is to make money or to produce plays for the good of its collective soul.

The point is fundamentally important. If the society's purpose is merely experimental, with little or no relation to money-making, it is free to take any sort of play it fancies and to make whatever mess it likes. Such societies can have no interest in the practical remarks that follow, and that are meant for the money-makers. The necessity of pleasing a public forces amateur societies to choose simple plays that are well within their capacities to perform with finish and effect.

What Sort of a Play?

Choice of play is therefore the first problem that faces the amateur players. Because the members are able to read and understand a subtle play, it by no means necessarily follows that they will be able to act it. The sure and delicate touch that is required for the effective presentation of such a play is only acquired by long practice such as a youthful producer seldom has chance to get. The first rule is: choose the simple play. There is plenty of dramatic force in the interplay of home characters, and lessons in representing these characters can be found by watching ordinary people who resemble them.

Scenery and settings are the next consideration. In these days there is seldom enough money to enable amateur societies to hire expensive scenery, and the making of their own scenery will be found quite expensive

and tedious, even if anybody can be found to do it. The play that is chosen must have simple settings, that can be improvised from ordinary household goods by people with clever fingers, or that can be suggested by drops or curtains. Simple peasant costumes are always easy to players that have ordinary ability in needle-work. Peasant plays are, as a matter of fact, generally pretty, and cheerful in colouring, in addition to being simple and homely enough for small societies to attempt and to present as a finished whole. They do not require an infinite amount of polish, and they do not look amateurish when done.

Choosing the Players.

When those two elementary considerations have been observed by the amateur players, and the simple play with simple settings has been adopted comes the difficult and thankless task of casting. The unfortunate producer runs the risk of arousing dissatisfactions and jealousies that will sap the enthusiasm of the whole company, including himself, if he does not give every part to the member who thinks himself fitted for it. All such truckling to the private vanities of the players must be resisted by the amateur producer, as they are by the professional. He must make up his mind, relying upon his own judgment almost entirely.

The most important point to remember in casting, is that character matters much more than face. It is the character that has to be matched to the part, and not the personal appearance of the player. Suppose the part be that of a pretty, frivolous girl;

there may be several pretty girls in the company, but if only her face is to be the guide, there is great risk that a pretty but studious girl will be chosen, who will find the greatest difficulty in acting in a frivolous manner. That illustration applies to all parts. The producer must sum up the possibilities of the people he has at his disposal and match them accordingly, as well as possible. Some of his members will not fit well, and he may have to drive them into making the most of themselves. Let him beware of driving them too far. While far less acting will be called for in those who are well matched, in the misfits there will be woodenness that will make a producer frantic with despair. If such players have no dramatic ability, and the producer tries to ride them hard, the result may well be to make them far more wooden than they ever were.

Producers Need a Firm Hand.

For a good production there must have been good discipline. A producer must take his courage in both hands and insist upon his members reading the whole play, and not merely their own parts. They must read the play two or three times, so that they know what it is about, and exactly what points they have to drive home with their own contributions. They must, of course, know their own parts thoroughly. The player who arrives late and says: "I have forgotten my

book, and I don't know my part," is not much good to any producer. In fairness to the company, each player must take his part seriously, put enthusiasm into the learning of it, and do as well as he can with it when rehearsals begin.

One further point I want to make is in regard to the halls that are available, for the performance of the finished play. Producers who leave to the last the enquiries they ought to make about the regulations applying to those halls may find unsurmountable obstacles suddenly in their path. There is the question of the excise stamps that have to be paid. They should be bought only after an estimate has been made of the takings of other people in similar halls with a similar type of play. If too many are, nevertheless, bought, they may be disposed of to other amateur producers; if too few, the number may be made up by taking over the surplus of another producer.

Enquiries, Please!

The subject of amateur play production is wide enough to enable me to say much more, but within my present limits I have chosen to say what I thought were the most important elementary things to assist the inexperienced societies. I shall be glad to receive inquiries from readers of this paper upon other aspects of the subject, and I shall do my best to give a full answer in every case.

NOW SUMMER IS HERE.

NOw that the summer days are coming League of Youth have need to take care that too many indoor activities do not result in a loss of membership. During the light and warm days of summer young people do not want to sit in stuffy rooms discussing serious problems. They want to get out into the open, to ramble along the country lanes, to cycle and to camp, and to generally enjoy themselves. If they find the League does not cater for this type of activity they will leave and join other bodies. It is, therefore, the League officials' task to see that steps are taken to arrange out-door activities throughout the summer.

The National Workers' Sports Association is now well on the way and the

development of sports activities in connection with the League is important. Tennis, cricket, swimming, hockey clubs should be organised and inter-league matches arranged. Rambling, camping, cycling and similar activities should be made a feature. And pleasure should be combined with propaganda. Whenever you go out on a ramble or a cycle ride, be sure you take some leaflets with you. Twenty years ago it was a common sight to see groups of Socialist cyclists distributing leaflets in country villages and selling newspapers that stated the Socialist case.

* * *

It is strange how people who do not belong to the League of Youth get peculiar ideas regarding its organisa-

(Continued on back page).

How to get Members

LONDON'S GREAT CAMPAIGN.

THE London Advisory Committee existed for six years and has over 40 branches of the League attached to it. The work of the Committee during that period has led to the London area to be regarded as the best organised area in the country, from a League of Youth point of view. There are certain reasons for this.

One is that they have the support of the London Labour Party with its well-organised political machinery. Another is that the travelling facilities, because of the geographical nature of the Metropolis, enable members of the Committee to pay regular visits to all the branches in their area and advise the Leagues on organising matters. Furthermore quarterly conferences of delegates from all over London are held and periodical social and political gatherings are organised.

A Five-Month Plan.

The L.A.C. feel that the remarkable development of League of Youth work during the last few years calls for a more intensive scheme of activity than week's campaigns and conferences and they have therefore commenced a continuous organised campaign for a period of five months.

By the time this appears in print the first lap of the campaign will be over and branches will enter the second heat of the race for 10,000 members for London. This effort to increase membership began on Saturday, March 5th, when Comrade L. J. Ford, who has been appointed central organiser, outlined the scheme to over 80 delegates who attended the Annual Conference of the L.A.C. at Toynbee Hall. **Every delegate has previously received a letter from Comrade Ford urging them to strain every nerve to enrol new members and thus set the seal of certainty on their success. Delegate after delegate got up and pledged their support in the campaign.**

In addition to giving all practicable assistance to the branches in their local efforts, the Advisory Committee sets itself the task of securing the formation of new branches in as many constituencies as possible.

All lapsed members are being asked to rejoin and for this purpose a personal letter from Paul Williams, the National Chairman, has been published by the L.A.C. Branches are being urged to form canvassing squads to canvass Party supporters with a view to getting their sons and daughters in the League.

A poster, "If you are young—Join the Labour League of Youth" has been published and branches can obtain these at the price of 3/- per 100. A panel of Youth speakers has been formed and open-air meetings are being held every week throughout the campaign. Each branch is also arranging, in consultation with the central organiser, one week during the period when a meeting will be held each night.

Details That Count.

Each month Report Forms will be completed by League Secretaries and submitted to the centre, and a comparative progress sheet will be issued by the L.A.C. showing the progress made by each branch during the month.

The organisation of a Mass Demonstration and the publication of a Campaign paper will depend on the extent of the support that Leagues give to the Central Fund and the Committee feel that they should receive an average of £2 from each branch if the campaign work is to be carried out effectively.

Last year Mr. Herbert Morrison, late Minister of Transport, kindly consented to give a Membership Cup to the most successful branch in the week's campaign. This Cup was won by the Central Hackney branch and the presentation will be made by Mr. Morrison at a meeting in Transport Hall, Smith Square, on Monday, April 18th.

The Cup will be competed for again this year and more than one branch is making thorough preparations to secure it.

TAKE NOTICE.

We hate grumbling but there are times when grumbling is necessary. For two months now we have urged upon branch secretaries the importance of answering communications sent out by H.O. In particular we have in mind the circulars relating to the proposed journal and the international affiliation fee. Some secretaries have taken note of our observations and have answered. But many have taken no heed, have failed to bring up the matter at Branch meetings and have permitted the business to be neglected. We cannot hope to establish a League journal or to take our part in the work of the International movement if our secretaries conduct branch business in this fashion.

Now, while an encouraging number of branches have answered both these circulars, in neither case has a sufficient response been received. We believe that members of the League of Youth want a journal and that once it is launched they will give to it their wholehearted support. But we also know that before such a paper can be launched we have got to convince the Labour Press Department that there does exist a real need for it and that adequate support can be found. This we can do only if secretaries reply to our letters and definitely state what number of copies their branch will order.

Wherefore, we urge upon all secretaries who have replied to neither of the circulars to look them up and to take a branch decision upon them immediately. We would urge branch members who know that these matters have not been raised in their branches to see that their secretaries are asked about them. Both are exceedingly important.

On another page we print a very interesting, instructive article on amateur dramatics that we feel confident will appeal to many League members. What we would like to emphasise is that Miss Dawson Large will be happy to answer questions and to give information to those interested enough to write her, c/o The Editor.

(Continued from page 2.)

tion and procedure. The other day we read an article in a contemporary in which a young writer suggested that the League of Youth is dominated by its parent. This is ridiculous as all who belong to the League know only too well. The League of Youth is an integral section of the Labour Party. All League members over 16 years of age are members of the Labour Party. The business of League branches is entirely in the hands and under the control of young people, none of whom is older than twenty-five years. This same remark applies not only to federations of branches but to the national advisory committee of the League which is elected by the annual conference. The League of Youth is an organisation of young people who belong to the Labour Party. To talk about it being dominated by extraneous influences is to reveal ignorance of the League's history and progress. It may not be all that some folk want it to be but its organisation is slowly improving, its usefulness is always increasing and its value to the movement is becoming generally appreciated.

**THE
NEW NATION
wants your support**

ASK YOUR
BRANCH
SECRETARY
ABOUT IT.

NOTICE.

"*The League of Youth Monthly Bulletin*" is issued by the Press and Publicity Department of the Labour Party. By arrangement with the "Labour Organiser" it is first published in the pages of that journal, from which it is reprinted for wider circulation.

NOTES and NOTIONS

PROVED, POOLED, PROOFED
AND PRINTED



ABULL in a china shop is the popular way of expressing one spectacular instance of matter in the wrong place. But the bull in the china shop is often found mucking around among Local Labour Parties, quite confident that he (we won't say she) knows all about how to run a Local Party; how to conduct elections and how generally to do all the thousand and one things calling for tact, knowledge and experience, which arise in the course of local organising work. This is not written to frighten off the uninitiated but to take to task those people who know all about everything, and never read either the "Labour Organiser" or anything else which there is to be read concerning organisation and electioneering. Fancy the editor of the "Labour Organiser" trying to drive a railway engine, to manipulate a surgeon's box of tricks or to referee at a football match! Yet there are lots of people who try to do just such silly things with our Labour Party machine without the slightest practical knowledge or any attempt to acquire knowledge.

Why does the school teacher enter college? the youth entering industry attend night schools? the would-be locomotive driver receive methodical training at the loco shops? the apprentice serve his time? or the young doctor study at a hospital? The answer is too obvious for repetition here, yet what an abundance of folk imagine they can practise organisation and its allied functions without any initiation. The multitudinous duties which arise in the course of local political organisation do call for training. Hence this paper. Think of the secretary's problems; membership, money raising, affiliations, local and Parliamentary elections, registration, book-keeping, correspond-

ence, filing, card indexing, minute taking, printing, duplicating, addressing, circularising, illustrating, advertising, billposting, local newspaper management, indoor, outdoor and business meetings, demonstrations, ticket selling, bazaar management, organising canvassing and speaking campaigns and special efforts, ward organisation, men's and women's and youth movements, general and special propaganda, drafting literature, literature selling, obtaining and training workers, etc., etc. Is it any wonder that people who have never attempted to acquire knowledge on the above subjects act sometimes like the bull of legendary fame?

By the way, is your Party one of those which are striving to fill a local social need rather than to fulfil their own rightful functions? Now there are local Parties whose whole endeavours are wrapped up in social work of one kind or another, and who as a consequence never function properly as a political force. Some Parties are wrapped up in clubs and catering; a few wrapped up in trading; some whose only outstanding activity is in conducting whist drives and selling draw tickets. Then there are others, and these are mostly numbered amongst Parties employing agents, who serve the public with what is virtually a poor man's lawyer department. It is the latter class of Party we want to advise to-day. There are lots of Parties where agents are employed, and where the agent works very hard, *but at the wrong work*. It is all very well to supply the public with advice on unemployment insurance, pension questions and a host of similar subjects, but *that is not what the Labour Party was established for*. These activities are occupying the time of certain agents to

the positive detriment of Party development, and the membership returns tell the story. We understand the excuse that in some cases Labour M.P's and candidates are bombarded by their constituents with all sorts of problems, and that these are devolved in turn upon the local agent. This may be true, but if the Labour Party is going to employ a corps of Philadelphian lawyers for giving the public advice, let it be done as a distinct enterprise rather than take men from their proper work to do it. M.P's and candidates have themselves to blame if organisation suffers because the agent's time is taken up with this class of work. It is time that all concerned took a firm stand. We do not believe that the poor man's lawyer business means much in the way of votes; certainly greater value is to be obtained if our officers and agents adhere to their rightful tasks. As it is, who does not know of complications which frequently ensue because political agents are overlapping the functions of industrial organisers?

Now that the intensified campaign for membership is slowing down and giving place to the more regular methods of development, the chain system for obtaining members might be given special thought. There are many places where little real canvassing was done in the membership campaign, and even where good work was done there yet remains other possibilities. The chain system is suitable for adoption in every type of area, and it is simplicity itself. In its simplest form it is merely an endeavour by each member to secure at least one other member within a specified time. How comparatively simple in practice must this be for thousands of our members if they can be persuaded to apply themselves to the work! Just one new member to be obtained by personal contact, and invitation among one's friends and neighbours within the next month. Where

the membership returns are unsatisfactory we strongly recommend a trial of this method. If the chain system is developed it means that the new members are in turn harnessed to the task of making another member each within a given time. But whether developed or no in successive waves the chain system applied once is capable of untold good. Will your Party try it?

One occasionally hears of the existence of "Men's Sections." In the model rules for Local Labour Parties, adopted in 1918 provision was made for the establishment of men's sections in all Local Parties. In the rules adopted at Brighton in 1929 there is no mention of these sections, and they are not recognised in the rules in force to-day. There is a fundamental difference between male individual members and women individual membership. The vast proportion of women enter the Party without any industrial connection, but in the case of virtually all the men there is also an industrial membership. Therefore the setting up of men's sections simply adds to the number of men's meetings without any corresponding advantage. There is one case however where it appears to us men's sections are called for, and this is when there is no possibility of men functioning in ward committees. The majority of towns are divided into wards, but there are certain towns which are not so divided and unless men's sections are formed in these places there is no machinery by which the male individual members can be represented on the General Committee, or by which they can function as individual members within the Party. In the much more common case of an area divided into wards or polling district committees we do not think a men's section is called for, because in these cases male individual members function automatically as members of ward committees.

(Please turn to page 64.)



Phone
Birmingham Central 0311

THE LINE ENGAGED

ANSWERED OVER THE PHONE



HELLO! Central 0311? "Labour Organiser" speaking! Have you to make a return of your election expenses now you are elected to the U.D.C.? No. No election return is necessary in these elections, but you must sign a declaration accepting office. The Clerk to the Council will give you the proper form, and it must be signed before him or two members of the Council within a month.

Hello! Hello! You are going to have a Sale of Work and want to know where you can get some fents, calicoes and made-up stuff at wholesale prices? You cannot do better than try Sullivan and Brown Ltd., of 71, Cannon Street, Manchester. This firm has supplied other Local Parties with their requirements in the matters you mention, and in various sorts of cloths, cretonnes, etc. They also deal in stockings, socks, underclothing, sheets, blankets and a host of similar things. The prices are genuinely wholesale, and afford a good margin of profit.

Hello! Hello! What's that? Thinking of going in for tea selling? Now, now, we are not going to advocate this, although we know a number of Labour Parties and kindred organisations are doing well by selling a certain brand of tea. This is all right as a means of making money, but it does not stand in quite the same relationship to Party development as a Bazaar or Sale of Work. Social functions have a distinct organising value, but tea and tobacco selling is trading pure and simple. This may be all right in exceptional cases, but in the main it is not to be encouraged, for trading is not the prime object of our Party. Our job is to make members and preach Socialism!

Hello! 0311? Who is speaking?

Yes, good meeting last night? Packed out? Good—how did the literature go—oh—bad? Bad sellers. Now, now. Was it bad sellers or bad organisation? You know you must train your sellers and get their services promised before the meeting. Your literature sellers might well have their little supplies over night. Have you tried making up your literature in shilling or two shilling packets, giving each seller the job of selling out and applying for another packet?

Yes, yes, we know the difficulties of getting about a packed hall, selling literature, but your sellers can make the crush worse unless they are supplied beforehand with their stuff and properly placed to cater only for a particular part of the hall. You must try to do better next time. What's that? You not only couldn't sell pamphlets, but the leaflets you left on the seats were not read? Lots of them on the floor? Take a tip from experience! Never put literature on the 'seats but ask the Chairman to announce the name and subject of the leaflet you wish to distribute and let him announce the distribution also. This should take place immediately he has spoken. If your hall has been well stewarded and the literature then goes round you will be surprised at the interest created and at the proportion of leaflets which are actually read and pocketed.

Hello! Who's that grumbling? Bad Party meeting last night? Only four turned up out of 18 on your Executive? What's the matter, friend? Do you still meet in that public-house? Ah, that's the rub! Rarely ever do we find a successful Party holding their meetings in public-houses. Take our tip and go somewhere else—even if you have to pay rent. No, it isn't prejudice, though we admit to a feeling

that a pub isn't the place for Labour. But cannot you realise that people who don't like drink may object to the place, and there are others who do like a drink who cannot afford to pay for it, and won't go into a public-house when they cannot.

Yes! What's that? Nominations? Oh! Some nominations have been handed in for your District Council Elections after the time has expired? Can these people go to poll? No, the law is quite definite on this question. It is to be found in the Statutory Rules and Orders which say a nomination received after time, i.e., 12 o'clock on the specified day *shall not be valid*. By the way, the R.O. is instructed to note on each nomination paper whether it was received before or after the time. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. We hope you get a walk-over.

Hello! What's that? "Daily Herald"? Don't like the "Daily Herald"? Too much Davidson? Oh, fie! Don't you realise you cannot have all the paper for Socialism? The new readers are not all Socialists, are they? And we suppose the "Daily Herald" knows what pleases the people. So don't complain. Pray rather that many naughty persons are yet to face the limelight, and so—On to the Second Million!

What's that? We are chaffing you? Dear no! Let us understand clearly that a newspaper is a newspaper, and a propaganda sheet is a propaganda sheet. The one sells and the other doesn't. The one must sell and the other needn't. Are you there? Well, why not turn the morals to good account. There are lots of Labour Parties with their own propaganda sheets, and because they cannot sell them they give them away, which is going one better. And they don't lose on them either. Take our tip. Don't cry for the moon. Don't pine because the "Daily Herald" isn't the holy bible of Socialism. Why not edit a Gospel yourself?

Hello! Youth Section wants to sell some lead pencils with its name imprinted on by way of advertisement for the Section? Not a bad idea. We can tell you where you can get good twopenny pencils that will yield a decent profit. Try Simon Birkbeck, Keswick, Cumberland. The pencils

work out at about thirty shillings for three gross, with a forty-eight letter imprint, or you can get a sample for twopence, post free. We are using a Keswick pencil at this moment. Perhaps you will mention this.

Central 0311? Proxy voters? You say one of your members is going abroad and wants to appoint a proxy? You have read the Representation of the People Act, 1918, and he does not seem to have the right to appoint a proxy? And if he did it would only last for the present register, and your member won't be back before next Spring? You want our advice? Well, to begin with, the 1918 Act won't help you very much in this matter. The Rules respecting proxy voters have been amended, and an amending Act of Parliament has also been passed.

Afraid your member won't be able to appoint a proxy at all although proxies may now be appointed by any person on the Absent Voters' Lists who satisfy the registration officer that there is a probability he will be out of the United Kingdom at the time of a Parliamentary Election. The old limitations of proxy rights to military voters, seamen, etc., have been swept away, and further, once a person appoints the proxy the appointment does not now expire with the current register. It goes on until specifically cancelled. This privilege ought to be extended to any person going abroad.

Hello! You are hearing rumours that somebody is going to be prosecuted for issuing a poster last October without a printer's imprint? Well, whoever is guilty is not out of the wood yet, though a prosecution must be commenced within one year after the offence was committed. We should, however, think it extremely unlikely that a prosecution will now be commenced. If it is the penalty is not likely to be very heavy if the offence was comparatively innocent. What's that? Apply for relief? Well you must consider whether it will be cheaper to stand the racket and pay a fine, or apply to the High Court. If the offender is not the candidate or agent there will be no other penalty than the fine.

Hello! Hello! You think you should have consulted us before regarding some irregularities at the last election? You say presiding officers

broke the Ballot Act, and there were several breaches of one kind and another? Also a lot of the sort of thing we exposed in last month's issue of the "Labour Organiser"? Yes? And now you want to know whether the election ought to be put aside or whether a similar remedy is possible on next occasion? No, it is too late to challenge last October's election, and in any case lodging an election petition is a costly job and not a very hopeful procedure where your complaints simply have reference to irregularities. The best course is to make a list of your complaints, making absolutely sure of your facts, and then lay them before the Returning Officer at a friendly interview. This is the most effective course to prevent repetition.

Hello! Where can you get a supply of number sheets for use in Committee Rooms on polling day? Try Mr. T. Summerbell, Printer, 10, Green Street, Sunderland, or The Blackfriars Press, Smith-Dorrien Road, Leicester.

Yes! Central 0311? You want to draw up a specially dainty advertisement for your last big dance of the season? And you want to know where you can buy ready-made blocks and designs. Try the Star Illustrating Works, Ltd., 15/16, Carlisle Street, Soho Square, London, W.I. These

people have a selection of blocks suitable for the purpose, the cost being approximately 2/6 to 3/- each.

Hello! "Labour Organiser" speaking. What that question? Had a mishap at the U.D.C. elections? Gained one seat and lost another? And the seat you have lost is that of the Labour Chairman-elect for the Council? Well, well, well. That's unlucky! Can a Chairman be elected who is not a member of the Council? Yes. Wait a moment, let us find the Local Government Act, 1894. Here we are—Section 59 (1) "The chairman of the Council . . . may be elected from outside the Councillors." Well, that's that, but we are glad to know you will think twice before suggesting this course. Labour has, in some areas, elected Aldermen in Boroughs from outside the Council, but ordinarily the practice does not accord with Labour ideas of democratic Government.

Hello! You want to know when the new League of Youth paper will be published? Sorry we cannot say definitely at the moment, but so far the sale guaranteed for the "New Nation" is 2,173 copies per month. We hope that in a few weeks a definite announcement will be made, and the "League of Youth Bulletin" will then, of course, disappear from our pages.

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Do We Lack Courtesy?

A CANDIDATE SPEAKS FROM EXPERIENCE.

By Miss MONICA WHATELY, Labour Parliamentary Candidate.

IS the Labour Party lacking in courtesy is a question I am frequently asked. In an endeavour to answer, I do not for one moment suggest that courtesy is the preogative of any one party or class of individuals, but I ask myself if courtesy indicating "Courteous behaviour or disposition" is more frequently to be found among those not belonging to the Labour Party, which claims to believe in a comradeship, in a new conception of human needs and social relationships, in the extension of the "home" spirit into national and international life? Nearly ten years ago Norman Angell declared that "Socialism assumes that men can make the kind of society in which they live, and refuses therefore to accept the world as we find it." That being the case, may I be forgiven when I say that Socialists have still much to learn and that to-day in many sections of the Party and among numerous individuals that spirit of courtesy is sadly lacking. It is perhaps more blatantly apparent in the little things, rather than in the big—in, for example, the annoyance to busy speakers when they are asked to address a meeting at 3 o'clock and find on arriving that they have to sit through the rigmarole of minutes, correspondence, discussion, election of delegates to conferences, local quarrels and so on, for anything from 30 to 40 minutes, or if the usual cup of tea comes round, it may be an hour before they are called upon to address the meeting. This could be so easily avoided if speakers were not asked to arrive before the time scheduled for their talk. I remember on one occasion being asked to speak to a Women's Section of the Labour Party. I arrived promptly at 3 o'clock, the time I was told the meeting commenced. Not only had I to sit through the usual business, but I had the unedifying experience of hearing prolonged discussion in detail about the local Labour Member of Parliament and his wife, about whom there was apparently some grave scandal. When the male agent appeared to give his views on the matter to the women, I realised how undesirable it would have been for a speaker, who was not a member of the Party, to be present. It is not necessarily the custom to ask only Labour men or women to lecture to such gatherings, and it is certainly

unfortunate when outsiders are forced to take part in the unearthing of the skeleton in the cupboard—unfortunate for the prestige of the Party, and most boring to the speaker.

Then there is the happy or unhappy possessor of a motor-car, who receives the request for the loan of his or her car for use at every by-election. Most of us with characteristic good humour, consent, much to the detriment of the car. How many of us receive the ordinary courtesy of a word of thanks? I used my car in a recent by-election in London. At considerable sacrifice I gave up a day's work, at some cost I paid the necessary expenses of oil, petrol, meals out during the day, and the cleaning of the car when I returned it to the garage at night covered with mud and filth. Not one word of appreciation or thanks have I ever received from the successful candidate, the agent, or any member of the Party. It is true, we do not give our time or money for the purpose of receiving thanks—that so many of us carry on our work without, is a proof of that, nevertheless it is a further indication of that lack of courtesy, which one is grieved to find in a party, which professes to believe in a new conception of human needs and social relationships. Lack of consideration evinced through the non-payment of money due to individuals from Party organisations is another example of this type of discourtesy. A cultured woman, who had divested herself of all her worldly goods, so as to become a worker in the Socialist movement, and who literally depended on the very small salary allowed her for her work, told me she frequently had to wait weeks for her pittance. As a Party propagandist she travelled all over the country, putting up in cheap lodging houses so as to save the Party expense, and to be presented with the bill, and to have no money to meet it, is agony to this sensitive woman.

Having given everything to further the Cause to which she has dedicated her life, she has a right to expect that the officers in that Cause should fulfil their share of the bargain by paying her regularly what is her due. Yet this ordinary courtesy is not observed.

My own experience as an UNPAID propagandist is much the same, though

giving one's service as a lecturer, one has often to wait months to be repaid the out-of-pocket travelling expenses incurred in carrying out one's work. It is unfair, and in many cases cruel, and is not in line with the principles we preach.

As a contributor to papers and journals of all shades of opinion, it is at once apparent to the journalist that they receive fairer treatment from the Conservative and non-party press, than they do from the Press controlled by some sections of the Labour Movement. At the risk of appearing egotistical I have given some personal experiences for I feel there is a certain value in speaking of what one actually knows rather than in making indefinite charges about matters on which many feel strongly. Though undertaking entirely at my own expense an investigation in the mining areas of Scotland during the lock-out, when I wrote my results and sent it to one of the Labour papers particularly concerned, it was published as from the "special correspondent" — my signature being completely ignored. I did not ask for, nor expect a fee for the article. The expense to which I had been put to obtain the first-hand information, the time involved in writing the article, I gave gladly in the hope that it might benefit those miners and their families who were suffering through no fault of their own — what I did expect was that the article when accepted would appear over my own name. The custom usually observed by papers of sending specimen copies to contributors, is often disregarded where Labour publications are concerned, and one gets in many cases, no fee, no acknowledgment of the receipt of the article, no galley-proof, no notification of when the article appears, and possibly no signature to the article when published.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that we find Labour Members of Parliament, Parliamentary Candidates and well-known Socialist writers using the medium of the Tory and non-party press. It is inevitable until we can find the same courtesy in the Labour Press as we find elsewhere.

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**AND, OF COURSE, THE USUAL
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Pleasant holidays on social lines. Liberal Menu. Moderate terms. Organised outings and entertainments.
Illustrated Syllabus from Dept. L.A.B., High Cliff, Scarborough

(Concluded from page 58.)

It is perhaps not generally appreciated in Labour ranks that Trades Union membership is beginning to show an upward tendency. After the long depression this fact combined with the continuance of a terrific unemployment rate is of prime importance to the Labour Movement. And it is cheering too. The official report of the Chief Registrar just published refers to the year 1930 and for that year there was a small decrease in membership of fourteen thousand odd, leaving the total membership for all registered unions at 3,764,348. During 1931, it is computed that at least 115,000 members have been added to the Unions as a result of the T.U.C. scheme of awards. Therefore even allowing for a substantial lapse due to unemployment the 1931 figures will still show an advance. It is interesting to note that the above-mentioned report for 1930 discloses an improvement in the financial position of the Unions. Even the income of £7,083,262 was a slight advance on that in 1929. The funds show an addition of nearly £290,000 and the aggregate funds of all Trades Unions at the end of 1930 was £11,651,159. Labour propagandists will be interested to note that in the year under notice the Unions spent nearly 4½ million in cash benefits to their members—approximately about three-fifths of the total. The Registrar's figures in short are a conclusive answer to the many misrepresentations of the Capitalist press, and they are good reading for Socialists.